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ABSTRACT

This 1996 technical report looks at California Early Literacy Learning (CELL), a staff development program designed to help elementary teachers strengthen their teaching of reading and writing. Reading Recovery and other research-based teaching methodologies have been organized into a framework for classroom instruction, and training in the framework is provided in a two-year format that includes participation by the entire instructional team. The report is divided into the following sections: California Early Literacy Learning; Framework for California Early Literacy Learning; Training Model; CELL Implementation; Goals 2000; What Participants Say; and Research. (NKA)

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CALIFORNIA EARLY LITERACY LEARNING

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Good First Teaching for All Children

CS 013 564

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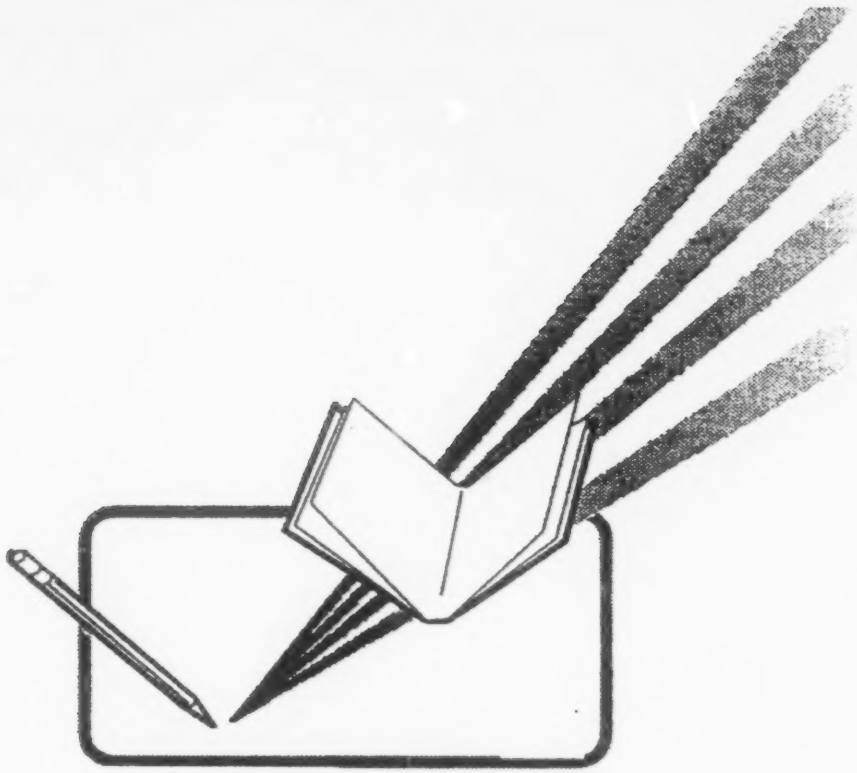

CALIFORNIA EARLY LITERACY LEARNING

GOOD FIRST TEACHING FOR ALL CHILDREN

Swartz, S.L., Shook, R.E.,
& Klein, A.F. (1996).
California Early Literacy Learning.
(Technical Report). San Bernardino, CA:
California State University

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California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)

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California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)

California Early Literacy Learning (Swartz & Shook, 1994) was developed in collaboration with researchers from Ohio State University (Pinnell & McCarrier, 1994) in response to requests from schools for a systematic classroom instructional model that would complement and supplement Reading Recovery. The intent was to ensure that all children have access to good first teaching. Research-based teaching methodologies have been organized into a framework for classroom instruction. CELL uses strategies that represent best practices; ones that are proven effective and firmly grounded in research.

Literacy learning in the classroom is designed to meet the needs and strengths of each individual child. The CELL model stresses and encourages active participation from each child regardless of his or her current level of literacy acquisition. High progress children are encouraged to continue their rapid growth while low progress children are guided through the process with continuous support. The opportunity to try new learning in a risk-free environment and practice new strategies throughout the day are encouraged. This model trains teachers to use a gradual decline of teacher support and a gradual increase in student independence based on demonstrated student capability. This decrease in teacher support is based on observations of individual child growth in understanding the processes of literacy. The child's use of a variety of problem-solving strategies is supported through good teacher decision-making about ways to assist each child toward the goal of independence. The elements of the CELL framework for instruction are designed to help each child and the whole class move together toward that goal. The framework has been designed to structure a classroom that uses literacy activities throughout the day of every school day.

This model emphasizes that the primary instructional role in the elementary grades is to teach reading and writing. Other curricular areas are delivered in this context using literacy activities as the method of instruction. The CELL framework of instructional activities includes oral language, phonics, higher-order thinking skills, and reading and writing activities.

The CELL training model is a peer coaching approach to helping teachers learn how to use the activities effectively in their classrooms and how to integrate the individual elements into an overall system of classroom instruction. Oral language is the underpinning for all of the elements of early literacy learning. The dialogue, discussion, verbal interaction, and active oral engagement of each child are stressed as each of the framework elements is used. Knowledge of the structure of language is known to increase with communication that occurs surrounding the literature that is read aloud and the themes that are studied across the curriculum of the

California Early Literacy Learning

- Delivers inservice training required by Goals 2000 and the California Reading Initiative.
- Implements major recommendations of the Reading Task Force and the Program Advisory.
- Was developed to support and complement Reading Recovery.
- Involves all members of the instructional team.
- Utilizes the best of children's literature.
- Provides ongoing professional development and support.
- Uses strategies proven effective with diverse populations.
- Is available in Spanish.

classroom. The practice of oral language and the development of new vocabulary through discussion and reading from a broad range of genre are reciprocal in nature. Skills development is also emphasized across each of the framework elements. Emergent readers must have the opportunity to develop phonemic awareness and have the opportunity to practice phonological strategies and decoding skills. These skills are best acquired in the context of meaningful activities and should be given extensive practice by reading quality literature.

The framework has been designed to structure a classroom that uses literacy activities throughout the day of every school day.

Framework for California Early Literacy Learning

emphasizes oral language, phonics instruction, and higher-order thinking skills through:

Reading Aloud

Introduces good children's literature.
Increases repertoire of language and its use.

Shared Reading

Promotes the development of early reading strategies.
Encourages cooperative learning and child-to-child support.
Stresses phonemic awareness.

Guided Reading

Allows observation of strategic reading in selected novel texts.
Provides direct instruction of problem-solving strategies.
Allows for classroom intervention of reading difficulties.

Independent Reading

Allows children to practice strategies being learned.
Develops fluency using familiar texts.
Encourages successful problem solving.

Interactive Writing

Provides an opportunity to jointly plan and construct text.
Develops letter-sound correspondence and spelling.
Teaches phonics.

Independent Writing

Encourages writing for different purposes and different audiences.
Fosters creativity and an ability to compose.
Allows opportunity to practice or attempt new learning.

Training Model

School-Based Planning Teams

To ensure schoolwide support for CELL, a School-Based Planning Team participates in a yearlong series of planning activities and framework training sessions. The School-Based Planning Team is composed of the school principal, a Reading Recovery teacher, a special education teacher, and one teacher each from pre-K, kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. Generally, a member of the team will emerge as a leader for the team during the year and agree to be trained as a literacy coordinator.

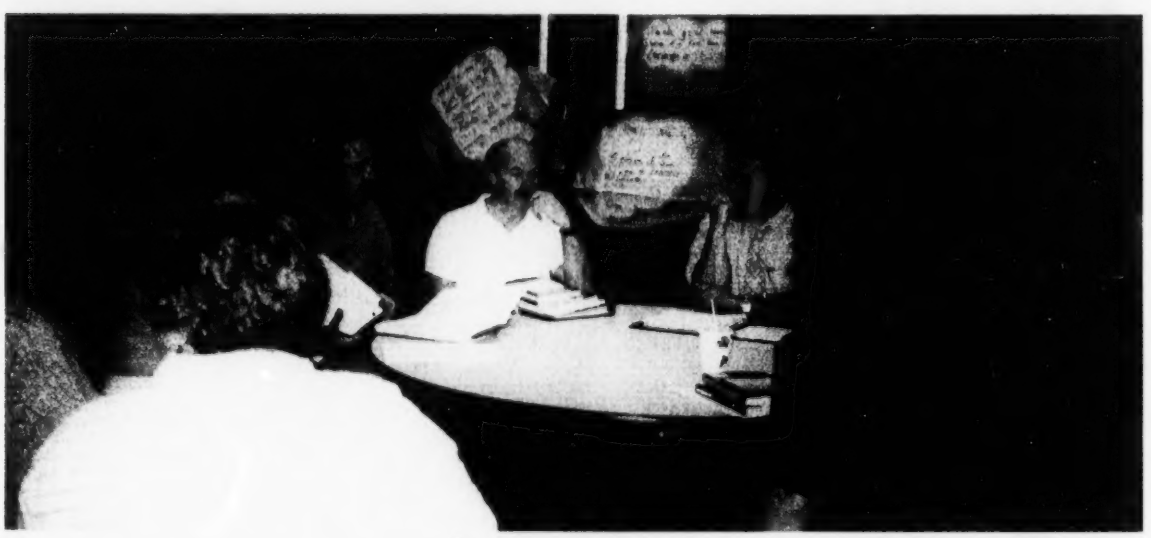
The teachers from each team receive initial training in the elements of the framework and begin implementation of the framework immediately after the first session. They receive feedback regarding their efforts at each subsequent session. This format allows a school to begin partial implementation of CELL and develop a resource for observation, demonstration, and support of the project. Training for these sessions is provided by the university trainers and the team of trained literacy coordinators from California.

Schools just beginning the restructuring process will participate in various School-Based Planning Team training activities throughout the first year. The training sessions include five full-day activities and attendance at the West Coast Early Literacy Conference & California Early Literacy Learning Institute. The training sessions focus on systematic observation and the elements of the CELL framework.

The School-Based Planning Team also works together during the training days to develop a vision for future literacy instruction for the primary grades of their school. Planning for long-term staff development over the next three to five years is a role of the School-Based Planning Team at each school. Supporting the Literacy Coordinator while in training is another function of each School-Based Planning Team. The Literacy Coordinator-in-training practices observation

Staff development that includes follow-up in classroom application is preferable.

California Department of Education, Reading Task Force, 1995



skills and peer coaching with the School-Based Planning Team members.

Literacy Coordinator

The Literacy Coordinator is the site-based staff developer who supports the implementation of the CELL framework. This individual has no supervisory responsibility, but rather serves as a coach and mentor to colleagues on the instructional team.

The Literacy Coordinator-in-training participates in five full-week trainings (Sunday through Friday) in September, November, January, and March and additional one-day training sessions in October, February, and April. This training consists of observations in schools with demonstration classrooms, group meetings to reflect on the teaching and learning observed, and seminars that combine theory and practice. Throughout the year, the Literacy Coordinator-in-training teaches a half day in a classroom using the elements of the framework and attends biweekly guided meetings.

In addition, the Literacy Coordinator supports the continued learning of the School-Based Planning Team, observes in classrooms half days, and begins framework awareness activities with the rest of the instructional team. During an additional one-week leadership training seminar in July, efforts are focused on peer coaching and construction of the staff development model.

Combining Programs

Schools that have initiated restructuring and have developed staff preparedness with previous literacy training and staff development can participate as a School-Based Planning Team and have a literacy coordinator trained concurrently. Training for the Literacy Coordinator includes participation in five full-week training sessions in addition to participation in the sessions with the School-Based Planning Team, plus attendance at the West Coast Early Literacy Conference and the California Early Literacy Learning Institute.

After the training year, the Literacy Coordinator begins full implementation at the site through training of the additional members of the primary team. Classroom observations that support this training are available in the classrooms of the original School-Based Planning Team and in the classroom taught by the Literacy Coordinator.

CELL Implementation

The growth of the California Early Literacy Learning project has been rapid from its inception. The CELL model is designed to make elementary schools self-sustaining through the training of literacy coordinators who can provide staff development and peer coaching to teachers in their own schools. The first year of the project focused on the development of model classrooms to be used in future trainings of literacy coordinators. Observations in these model classrooms are used to provide that training. During 1994-1995, the first model classrooms were developed. During 1995-1996 and 1996-1997, additional model classrooms were developed to expand the training capacity. CELL implementation since 1994-1995 is outlined in Table 1.

School-Based Planning Teams were established to assist schools in their long-term planning for staff development that supports literacy acquisition for all children. School-Based Planning Teams meet five times during the school year with the CELL training team. School-Based Planning Teams also meet on a monthly basis in their home schools to extend their learning and discuss their teaching of the CELL framework.

The number of literacy coordinators has grown as the project has gained momentum during its first three years of implementation. The number of children served by teachers using the CELL framework is exponential due to the capacity-building nature of the training. The number of children served will expand quickly as literacy coordinators train teachers in their home schools.

Goals 2000

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act provides funding for inservice training for all kindergarten through third grade teachers in efficient and comprehensive reading instruction. The California Early Literacy Learning project ensures the delivery of in-service training required by the Goals 2000 A-K competencies as well as the A-M competencies of the California Reading Initiative. The teaching of phonemic awareness, systematic explicit phonics instruction, sound symbol relationships, decoding, word attack skills, spelling instruction, and diagnosis of reading deficiencies are all emphasized in the CELL classroom. In Table 2, the elements of the CELL framework are coordinated with the A-K competencies of Goals 2000 and the A-M competencies

Table 1
California Early Literacy Learning (CELL) Implementation

	Schools with Model Classrooms	School-Based Planning Teams	Literacy Coordinators	Children Served
1994-95	4	--	9	1,710
1995-96	3	23	14	11,280
1996-97	2	31	22	23,015
Total	**9**	**54**	**45**	**36,005**

Table 2
Correlation between CELL Framework and Goals 2000 and California Reading Initiative Competencies

CA Reading Initiative A-M Competencies	Goals 2000 A-K Competencies	Reading Aloud	Shared Reading	Guided Reading	Independent Reading	Interactive Writing	Independent Writing
A. Phonemic Awareness	A. Phonemic Awareness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B. Phonics Instruction	B. Phonics Instruction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C. Sound Symbol Relationships		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D. Decoding			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Encoding
E. Word Attack Skills			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F. Spelling Instruction	C. Spelling Instruction		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
G. Diagnosis of Reading Deficiencies	D. Diagnosis of Reading Deficiencies	Listening and Aural Comprehension	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
H. Research on How Children Learn to Read	E. Research on How Children Learn to Read	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
I. Research on How Proficient Readers Read	F. Research on How Proficient Readers Read	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
J. Structure of the English Language	G. Structure of the English Language	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
K. Relationships between Reading, Writing, and Spelling	H. Relationships between Reading, Writing, and Spelling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
L. Planning and Delivery of Appropriate Reading Instruction	I. Planning and Delivery of Appropriate Reading Instruction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	J. Means of Improving Comprehension	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M. Independent Student Reading	K. Independent Student Reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Every school and district must organize and implement a comprehensive and balanced reading program that is research-based and combines skills development with literature and language-rich activities.

California Department of Education, Reading Task Force, 1995

from the California Reading Initiative.

The inservice training provided through CELL also includes research on how children learn to read, how proficient readers read, the structure of the English language, and the relationships between reading, writing, and spelling. Teachers are provided a means to plan and deliver appropriate reading instruction based on assessment and evaluation using independent student reading of high quality books. Reading instruction is based on improving reading performance and comprehension.

The elements of the CELL framework provided during the inservice training are reviewed and discussed by both experienced and novice teachers in a participating elementary school. Schoolwide staff development is provided by a specially trained literacy coordinator skilled in both the theories and practices in current research as well as in peer coaching to assist teachers in taking on the new learning and instructional methodologies used in the CELL framework.

What Participants Say

Classroom Teachers:

"With all the elements being used, the children are receiving good first teaching."

"Teachers who participate in the CELL program do not stagnate. They are evolving. Looking inward, growing, sharing, changing, are all part of what it means to be a CELL teacher. The CELL program, like life, is never stagnant. It is a process of total engagement on the part of all participants."

"CELL provided a framework with which I could teach according to my understanding of how kids think and learn. I watch my students making literacy connections daily. My students are learning at a pace I never imagined possible for *at-risk* kids."

"Through all the professional development and support from my literacy coordinator, colleagues, and site administrator, I have learned so much about the elements of CELL. As I continue to learn and use the elements, I am becoming more convinced that it works."

"My first year at a CELL school was one of new learning, rethinking, and change. I admit I was very reluctant to change my way of thinking. However, given time, my literacy coordinator, guided meetings, professional growth, and the support of my peers, I have come to the conclusion that CELL has taught me how to teach!"

Principals:

"I am the principal of a large, urban, year-round school with 95 percent Title I-identified and 80 percent limited English proficient (students) . . . . I can see children achieving more and at higher levels than ever in the history of this school."

"The strongest effect of CELL has been the improvement in the regular classroom. The base program has improved 100 percent. Pull-out and push-in programs are no longer the first line of intervention—good first teaching is!"

Literacy Coordinators:

"Now that I have been in CELL (this wasn't true at first) my expectations have steadily increased and continue to rise, and also, my preconceived ideas (limitations) have been drastically decreased and continue to be reduced."

"CELL has developed among our teachers a common frame of reference as we discuss our students' growth and needs. We have also developed a much stronger and clearer sense of purpose and cohesiveness."

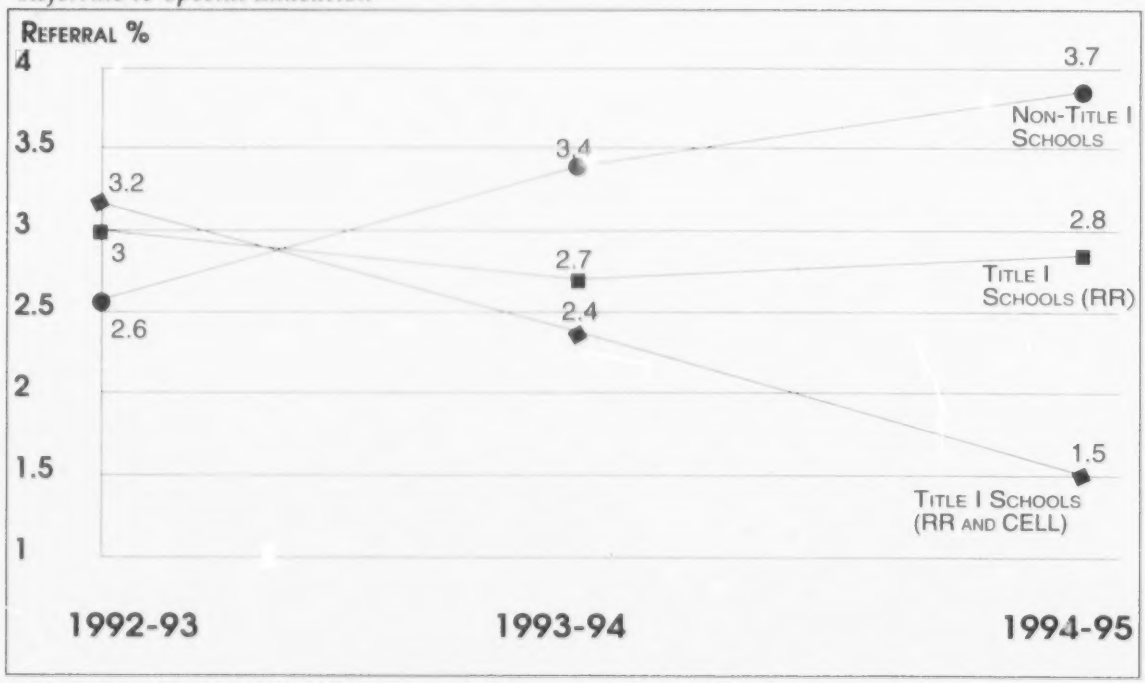
California Early Literacy Learning (CELL) is a research-based program. All elements of the framework were selected because of their substantial support in the research literature. CELL participants assist in the collection of data that are used to document program success and individual student gains.

As soon as possible after the opening of school, a random sample of each class (approximately six children) is administered the Observation Survey (Clay, 1993) by teachers and the Literacy Coordinator. Within the last three weeks of school, the Observation Survey is readministered to the same sample using replacement procedures. During Fall, the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test is administered to second graders. These scores are used to assist in the analysis of student outcome data. Additional data available from the school (e.g., standardized test scores) are used to assist in this analysis.

Preliminary data from one of the early Reading Recovery districts and a demonstration site for CELL are graphed in Table 3. Referrals to special education have been directly impacted by Reading Recovery and CELL implementation. Referrals are lower for Reading Recovery schools compared to schools not using Reading Recovery over three academic years. Referrals from the CELL demonstration school during the training year show a referral rate more than two percentage points below the district mean.

Referrals to special education were reduced.

Table 3
Comparison of Title I, Non-Title I, Reading Recovery, and California Early Literacy Learning Referrals to Special Education



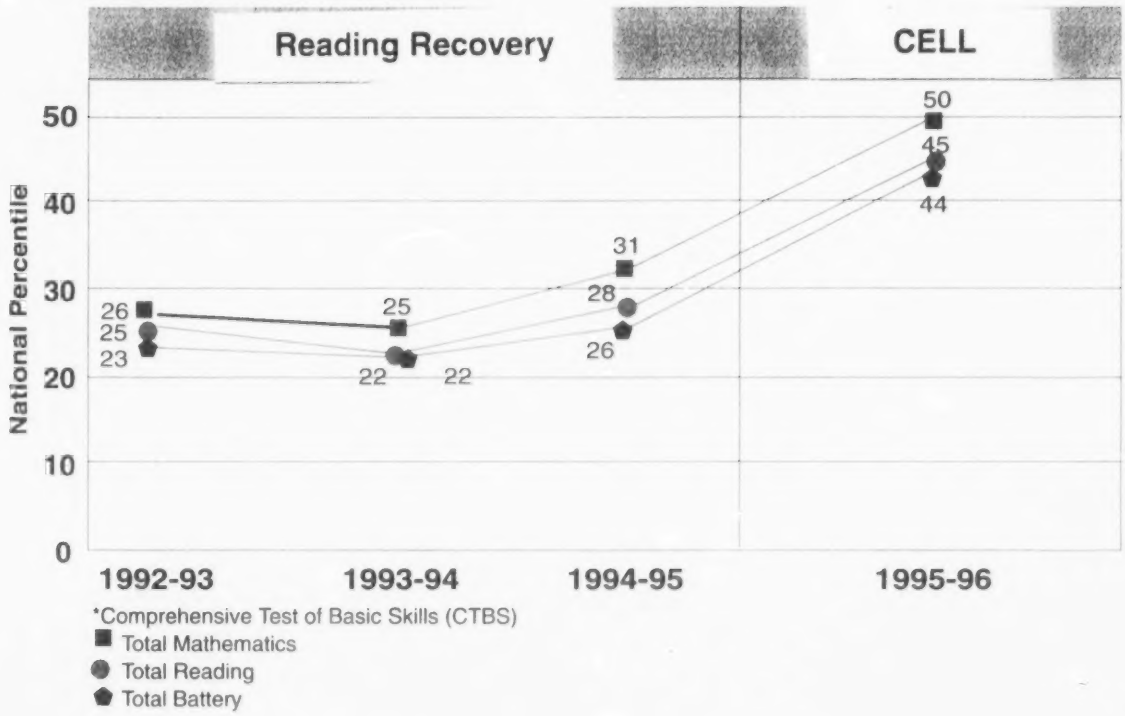
(Colton Joint Unified School District, 1996)

These data support the position that early intervention can impact the need for special education referral (Swartz, 1995). It is also a measure of the benefit of providing intense staff development in literacy learning.

Table 4 compares standardized test scores for a Reading Recovery school that added CELL participation. Scores increased for the reading and mathematics subtests as well as the overall test battery scores. The important relationship between achievement in literacy and achievement in mathematics is suggested by these results.

Table 4

Impact of California Early Literacy Learning (CELL) on Standardized Test Scores* for First Graders
(N=90) Newark [CA] Unified School District



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* CELL staff members Drs. Stanley L. Swartz and Adria F. Klein were both members of the California Reading Task Force that produced this document. Swartz was primary editor of the final report.

**Dr. Adria F. Klein was the major researcher for this reading advisory from the California Department of Education.